881 hovel as was performed for the ripening of the algarroba."

"Marriages have no special ritual of any importance. They
582 do not marry close consanguineous relatives but do so with in-laws. Although they usually marry another member of their own nation, they are not forbidden to marry those of another, especially of the Toba nation. Parental authority has no say whatever in the childrens' marriages, and these latter marry as they wish to, when they wish to and whom they wish. The woman requires the groom to be a good fisherman and he that the bride not be too much of a homebody but be willing to wander about the countryside in search of food."

585 "The marriage being done in secret, the couple go off to the
591 forest for five or six days. On returning to the village they live openly in the hut which they choose to occupy, although the normal thing is for the bride to go to live in the hut of her parents-in-law."

595 "Polygamy is very rare and it is most uncommon to come
586 across a man having two wives simultaneously. However they do not recognize conjugal indisolubility and the younger persons quite frequently divorce each other. This is not so apt to happen among older men, although a whim is often enough to bring a divorce about.
[684] Adultery is considered a crime and is not very common. The wife of the man involved will invariably avenge herself upon the adultress, going to her hut publicly, shouting at her wildly and disfiguring her by giving her a sound beating with a stick in the presence of the whole village which congregates to jeer.

843 "When pregnant the woman is not given the least considera-
846 tion. After bearing her child she lies on the sand for a few days while her husband abstains from fishing and from all other activities."
[595]

854 "The mothers are very loving in bringing up their children. While they are little they seldom part from them, and amidst the burdensome domestic chores and daily foraging trips into the country-
[482] side they carry their babies about with them in a wide transverse swathe. When the children are a little bigger they carry them on one
[553] or other of their shoulders. When they are two or three years old they are given names."

647 "Abortion is very frequent, particularly among the unmarried women, and it is brought on by their striking their abdomens or by having some other person strike them. Infanticide is rare but it happens now and then that a very small suckling child is put to death so that, buried at its dead mother's side, it may receive milk from her."

291 or netting, which reaches down to their knees or a little less. Some men of more sophisticated taste sometimes put on a sort of waistcoat, hand woven from garavata fiber and painted. Of the same material [415] and made in the same way is the bag which they are in the habit of carrying at their side, in which, when they travel, they keep their flint and steel or the fiber and wax for their arrows and other small things which they use. When at home, at least at nighttime, they wear no clothes—possibly to keep from damaging them."

622 621 "There is no use looking for chiefs or captains with any authority, for among them there are neither any who give orders nor any who obey them—they only have friendly respect for, and sometimes follow the advice of, someone among them who enjoys a certain prestige or who is very likeable. In time of war or common danger, some make limited alliances between a few huts only, for sake of unity." [602]

582 "They marry without any visible ceremony and without formalities of any sort; nor do the parents play a role in the matrimony of their children, who marry when they wish to and to whom they wish—the women always give preference to a man who is adept at fishing, and the men seek out those women who are active and diligent in their search for fruit. Once a man and a woman have come 585 591 to an understanding they go off together into the forests for a few days, doing whatever they see fit to do, and return then to the encampment where they either set up for themselves or go to live with the woman's 595 parents-in-law. Few indeed are those who have more than one wife, even though divorce, among the younger set, is frequent. Adultery 837 684 also appears to be rare; the women do not consent to others having affairs with their husbands, on the contrary, they go to their houses and insult, threaten and fight them, a thing which often proves highly amusing to the men, women and children of the same camp, all of whom come out of their abodes to see the gestures and grimaces which the two women perform for each other's benefit, laughing uproariously and applauding noisily and gleefully the name calling and cursing, blows and kicks which they meet out to each other rather disgracefully.

774 "It would be useless to look for religious beliefs amongst a people so miserable, not to say stupid. It seems, nevertheless, that they do have some idea of the soul, which they call neusec, but about whose 776 ultimate destiny they have no clear idea. They also have a jumbled

At a wedding which is properly celebrated with all the attendant frills there are alcoholic beverages made from the pods of the algarrobo and vinal, and from forest honey -- regarding all of which I shall write in the following chapter. 273 [585]

Chapter VI

Fermented Beverages

Natural Products of Domestic Use

The algarrobo is to these parts what the chestnut tree is to Europe in its usefulness to the people who live in the region. By observation I have found that it grows in the area between one hundred and four hundred meters above sea level and between 30° and 15° of southern latitude, between the mountains and the sea. It does not like dampness, which keeps it from growing even in those places which would otherwise suit it. In dry, hot places I have come upon it even at an elevation of seven hundred meters above sea level, but always in flat country. 137

The algarrobo is found in various situations. Sometimes there are whole forests of this tree only; sometimes it grows in company with others. In my judgment it is the most widely distributed tree in the region and deserves, for this reason, and because of its great importance to have a whole area or forest zone named after it. It is to be found, in fact, growing both in forests rooted in earth built up out of the waters when these lands were raised, and in alluvial soil recently washed down.

The wood of the algarrobo is ideal for most construction purposes (except for roofing) and carpentry, but usually has the drawback of being short. There oozes from the trunk a black resin for which we have no use but the Indians do. The fruit is in the shape of a pod and contains a somewhat sweet flour which is used to make bread and fermented drinks. 137 824

There are in the region three types of algarrobo: the white kind which has pods in color and size similar to our white beans, from which a good beverage is made and the flour of which could be used. The black kind with pods like black eyed peas from which an inferior

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK 6

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or whom she only wants for a temporary lover. Above all she wants as a husband a man who treats her well and possesses the qualities necessary to support the future family. Since the Choroti to a great extent live by fishing, skill in this art is naturally reckoned among a man's most praiseworthy qualities. Importance is also attached to skill in gardening and hunting. Consequently, when a young man is courting a girl, he tries to gain her favour by presenting her with fish in abundance. I was told that when several men are courting the same girl — which naturally is often the case — the man who brought her the largest quantities of fish had the greatest chance of gaining preference.

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Thus among the Choroti, marriage is from a man's point of view an important matter. When the parents send out their young son to take part in the dances and to find a wife, they follow his undertaking with the keenest interest. Every evening the father shakes his magical rattle gourd (*pelīte*) in order to promote his son's enterprise and »hurry on» the girls on his behalf. When the rattle gourd is used for such practical purposes the ceremony is called *nekeńlitse símä*, which literally means: »to shake the rattle to get (or obtain) something».

C 585

Apart from these ceremonies in connection with courtship, there are no particular marriage rites, except the necessary drinking-bout which accompanies all family feasts and in which only the men take part. The young couple are without any further ceremony regarded as married, but marriage is not fully complete until a child is born.

M [171] [562] 527 836 584

Among the *Mataco*, marriages are not particularly contracted in connection with the dances, but conditions are the same as among the Choroti in so far as the women play the active part both as concerns incidental amorous relations and marriages proper. The great drinking-feasts during the algaroba season are the occasions when a woman enters into temporary or permanent relation with a man. When the men are intoxicated, the girls avail themselves of the opportunity, seize the youths whom they like by the hands and take them to their houses where they spend the night with them. These liaisons lead in many cases to real marriages.

M ● 585 789 535

When marriage is agreed upon, it is celebrated with the usual ceremonies which have a religious significance. The drum, the most important magical instrument of the Mataco, is beaten the whole night with a view to keeping off evil spirits from the couple. Similarly, a ceremonial dance, called *Nahútsak*, is performed in the evening. It is a ring-dance much like the marriage dance *Avúshe* of the Choroti. The couple being married are seated in the middle of the ring and their friends dance and chant around

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12

them. The aim of the dance is partly to protect the former against supernatural dangers, an idea generally associated with the Indian ring-dances. But in addition, it seems to have special reference to marriage, for it is supposed in some mysterious way to influence the marriage candidates favourably. On this particular point, however, I did not receive further information from the Indians.

Lastly, we have to consider the marriage customs of the *Tobas*. The Tobas are generally monogamous for the simple reason that it is difficult for an ordinary man to maintain several wives and a large family, but there are exceptions to this rule. Polygamy is, however, allowed by custom, and if a Toba considers himself rich enough and has an opportunity of getting wives, it is of no rare occurrence that he marries two, three, or more women, who generally live in different villages owing to the jealousy they entertain for each other. This kind of polygamy is especially found among the great chiefs. Thus the famous cacique Tayeclique has had in all ten wives. One has died, he has divorced five, and at the time of my stay among the Tobas he had four wives. Such great chiefs frequently separate themselves from their wives only for the sake of marrying some younger and prettier woman. The children of a divorced wife have not the same rights as the children of her supplanter, and if the eldest son is born of such a wife he cannot become chief on the death of his father; in this case the eldest son of the new wife will inherit the cheftainship. The father, however, does not break completely with the children of a divorced wife if they are adult, but maintains relations with them, and they sometimes visit their father.

Among the Tobas, as among most Chaco tribes, prenuptial chastity is almost unknown, great sexual liberty being allowed both boys and girls before marriage. As soon as a girl is marriageable, that is, has passed her first menstruation, she may choose casual lovers, and generally she does not fail to make use of her freedoom. Although in some parts of the country, the sexual liberty of the Toba girls seems to have degenerated into prostitution, there is no doubt that the social morality of the people has approved of this custom since ancient times. The young men and women meet at the dances, some of which, among the Tobas as among the Choroti, are intimately connected with the sexual life. The girls cannot, however, as among the Choroti, take the initiative in contracting marriage.

When a Toba man has found a girl whom he likes and wants for his

584 chooses a husband for his daughter, but he would never go
585 against his wife's wish. The ceremony is not celebrated.
The son-in-law lives first at the hut of his wife's father where
he stays for three months at least, working for him. Later
591 he can build a hut for himself. The young couple live in a
separate compartment.

Nowadays either the bride follows the bridegroom or he
595 goes to live with her, according to circumstances. Ordinarily
men have only one wife, some have two, but never more.
[593] Except for adultery a husband never beats his wife. Although
837 a woman is exposed to a severe beating if her husband discovers that she has betrayed him, it does not prevent many women from doing so. A woman will choose a day when her husband is absent and then send a child to tell her lover that she is alone. A couple must not be seen together for there would be some gossip. A man generally leaves an
[518] unfaithful wife after beating her first. He challenges his
rival and they fight with knives. The different »milks»
[831] must not be mixed up.

XVI. Chiefs

622 All the members of the tribe follow the *cacique* everywhere without protest. As for him, he is responsible for all the members of his group. If one of the latter has committed
[672] a theft, even outside of the tribe, the *cacique* will be arrested
by the police. Quarrels among members of the same group
[627] are settled by the *cacique*. If a big *cacique* is killed in a
[726] fight his troop retreats immediately, even if the other *caciques* are still living.

XVII. War

726 In ancient times, when a young man was going to war,
825 he pinched the skin of his thigh and drove the sharpened bone of a jaguar into it. This operation was supposed to make the warrior courageous. Members of a war party did the same with a peccari's bone so they would be fierce,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

Mataco Marriage

By Niels Fock

This paper was written on a field trip to the Mataco, carried out under the auspices of the Fundación Williams, Argentina with support from the Danish State Research Foundation. I wish to express my hearty thanks to these institutions, and particular thanks to my professor, Dr. Kaj Birket-Smith, who has supported the expedition both scientifically and morally.

The Mataco Indians inhabit the western areas of the Argentine Chaco between the Rio Pilcomayo and the Rio Bermejo. They have for centuries been in contact with civilisation, but as a frontier tribe they seem to have built up a special traditionalism as a protective bulwark. Particularly the north-eastern Mataco at the central Pilcomayo have preserved their ancient traditions to this day, and the occupational system is still stamped by the collecting by women and the fishing of the men. The customs in connexion with marriage have to a large extent been retained unaffected to the present day, evincing many primitive features as, for example, the lack of any form of wedding ceremony. The contraction of marriage extends over a period dating from the girl's initiation until her first confinement.

The Mataco regard the initiation of girls as an introduction to marriage. This initiation consists in the girl's seclusion—or better—segregation from everyone apart from her mother. It comes as a prolongation of her first menstruation, and the long isolation is spent in continual work making *caragualá* cord. It is considered very important that this work should be performed rapidly and well in order that an impression can be formed of the girl's ability as regards her main occupation in the future. As a rule the end of seclusion is marked by an *aleja* festival during which the girl looks around for a man. That same night she is able to take him with her to her home and allow him to sleep with her.

The girl being initiated is then called *anatsha;* sexually and economically she is now ready for marriage. Normally several years will pass during which the girl may well search for a husband, but the actual result of her efforts is a series of sexual relations that seldom endure beyond a few days. It is nearly always the girl who takes the initiative for these short term adventures. At the village dancing-place where every evening the young men dance in chains or rings, the girls also

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

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[177] Fig. a.—Two Mataco girls electing partners among the younger men, who are performing their nightly chain-dance. Nowadays, especially the young men wear European rags. Flash-phot. Fock.

Formerly,

582 it was customary that two bands lived close to each other as, for example, the satnáy and sitóy, and consequently the girls from the satnáy preferred to marry men of the sitóy band, and girls of the sitóy men of the satnáy band. The two bands became so inter-married that "the whole thing was like one band", and the [622] two chiefs were able to discuss questions of dispute. Here, therefore, developments had gone in the direction of forming temporary, loose marriage classes. The [611] descent rules of the Mataco are patrilinear, so that, theoretically, exogamy should not impede cross-cousin marriage. In the meantime, there is no example of this practice, the nearest case being a single instance of a man's marriage to a sister's daughter. These cases must presumably be understood as expressing a man's wish to preserve his original locality. This is theoretically only possible in a matri-local exogamous patrilineal system by marrying one's sister's daughter.

583 It has been mentioned that a young man and girl who move in together [591] always move to the house of the girl's family. Here they merely dwell temporarily, 844 as a rule for about a year, so that the girl can give birth to her first child with the 585 advice and assistance of her mother. The previous sexual relations of the girl are 847 considered as trial marriages, but the birth of the child is regarded as the final 581 test, whereafter she and the child's father are deemed to be married. She is then called *anutshe tahnayáy*. Should a girl prove with child during a trial marriage,

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 SI7 Mataco SI7

583 this will not influence her choice and that of her parents. An abortion will be
581 produced artificially should the man prove to be inacceptable. Should the girl
847 prove to be pregnant at a time when she has started a new, more stable, relation, the new young man will demand that she aborts.

585 Thus the consummation of the marriage, the creation of a family, is, for the
591 Mataco, identical with the commencement of a completely valid marriage. As a rule the family moves shortly after the birth to its own hut, though still near
[178] the girl's parents. Village matrilocality is permanent, and until about 40 years
[342] ago, when communal houses were still the most common, the sharing of a hut with the wife's family for a whole lifetime, was the rule.

593 Already in connexion with her initiation each girl is given certain advice by
[881] her mother concerning the proper behaviour as a married person. The mother
867 will tell her, for example, that she must treat her coming in-laws as though they
[606] were her own parents and that she must always be generous when it is a matter of sharing food with them. She will also counsel the girl to show respect to her future husband, fetching fuel, for example, when he is away fishing, and ensuring that there is plenty of water for him when he returns from hunting. Willingness to cooperate and mutual respect are very typical of the relations between man and wife. The man's position in marriage is formally the same. He must regard his
[606] wife's parents as his own, must be generous to them, though in fact they do not treat him with the same indulgence they would show a son. In any conflict that may arise they side with the daughter against the husband. Should he not be sufficiently industrious he will be sent out to fish or hunt, and if unsuccessful he will be reproached, something that no Mataco would do to a son. If a man quarrels with his mother-in-law he is chased away. His happiness depends to a high degree upon an equable temperament and ability to obtain food. But as his wife will
[476] always share his bag with relations and friends, and because matrilocality prevails, the wife's family will always obtain the lion's share of what he brings back.

606 The position of a son-in-law as a stranger in another band also raises difficulties
609 for him. In case of dispute his wife's family or other local people will be able to say: "We don't know him and don't trust him". Perhaps he has no kin in the village to vouch for him and give him assistance. The position of a son-in-law can thus be compared to that of a stranger in a big city, irresponsible because he is unknown, and overlooked for that reason.

593 The mutual relations of married couples are naturally stamped by matrilo-
554 cality and the woman's very considerable occupational effort, which together give the wife a good social position in relation to her husband. In the meantime it is more through the wife's family that this status is manifested. As between the sexes the husband still dominates. As a rule it is the husband who has the say, but it is often the woman who decides what is to be said. The latent tension
[182] between family and sex results in a curiously unintegrated behaviour. By day a man and wife behave almost like strangers to each other. They are extremely terse

5: Fock E-5 (1962) 1963 S17 Mataco S17

of band exogamy, is the main reason for blood feuds and inter-band warfare. The marriage system thus obtains a far-reaching political influence. Its effectiveness in the case of the Mataco seems far from sufficient, for one thing because no form of extra-marital valve exists. The only thing in this respect is the trial marriage, which is interesting because it clearly discloses the factors that are considered most important in connexion with the creation of a family: first the girl's choice according to inclination and sexual standards, then the sorting done by the couple and the parents on the basis of economic and social position, and, finally, the demand that the union shall be fruitful. Until these three demands are complied with a marriage is not fully recognized by society; should the woman remain childless, it is an acceptable reason for the man to be divorced from her.

Presumably on account of the undefined character of the contract of marriage, no specific wedding ceremony takes place with the Mataco. Family and band solidarity is regarded as so important that the ban on incest and its conventional extension, band exogamy, are considered as measures to counter internal dissension and the forming of cliques. Based on instincts, marriage as an institution can only partially be analysed by an ethnographer, but it seems fair to say that the function of the Mataco marriage, both biologically and culturally, is the creation and maintenance of the family, the greatest possible consideration being shown to the wish of the two parties to preserve the solidarity of the respective bands without thereby upsetting mutual peace. With the Mataco, therefore, marriage, mankind's oldest contract, is not so much a matter of the individual as a family affair.

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July 1962.

/319 cont./

433 They do not work, plant, or do anything similar; they
222 are but mediocre fishermen and barely hunters. To live they
241 lay up great stocks of chañar, algarrobas, and mistol fruits, and with some gourd seeds placed under the earth they have extraordinary harvests if the year is moderately rainy.

786 They organize their orgies when the algarrobas, chañar,
578 and mistol are in season, and then the quarrels and murders occur
682 among the men; these crimes go unpunished by the authorities, for there are none. But if the one who has perished had relatives they will take revenge.

342 /320/ They do not bother to build houses or such things.
513 They make a kind of oven; for it they bend some branches of small trees, fix them to the ground, cover these branches with straw or grass, and they sleep underneath in a pile in the company of their dogs.

164 This is the reason for the excessive mange which kills
515 them and makes them look so disgusting, since they are not at all partisans of the daily bath, as the Chiriguano are, and when they do bathe, they roll about in the river sand or in the ashes of their oven-houses.

584 They do not seek the consent of their parents for marriage
● 585 nor do they have ceremonies. Do two young persons, a man and a woman, love each other? They leave the common settlement, go to the woods, stay a few weeks, and then return, now married, to live with their in-laws or to make another oven like the one of their elders.

586 Young people divorce each other easily, but they are
152 more constant than the Chiriguano in married life. Nonetheless,
837 the women are very jealous and do not readily consent to their
593 husbands' being with other women; for this reason they keep them content with the work of bringing them much fruit from the forest and caressing them.

302 Men and women cut their hair; some of them stain their
301 faces and pierce their ear lobs, in which they put a piece of wood, like the Toba, but this is not a distinctive mark of the race.